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Victim Compensation CONNECTION

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C A L I F O R N I A
V C G C B
Victim Compensation & Government Claims Board
Helping California Crime Victims Since 1965

Karen McGagin
Executive Officer



A Year of Change

FROM THE DESK OF KAREN MCGAGIN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

There is an old
Buddhist saying
"...change is the
only constant."
Certainly in this

age of technology we are confronted with change on a daily basis. As I reflect upon the past year, I realize what a year of change it was for our organization. We all know that change is not easy, it causes discomfort, uncertainty and creates resistance. Knowing this and considering the significance and number of the changes that were made in 2007, we accomplished much:

- Last January, we moved to our new headquarters building. A move is never easy, but our move has so many benefits: the new location is in a safer neighborhood and more professional setting; the building is a modern facility; our rent is less; and we are all located on two floors in a more collaborative setting.
- To provide victims more assistance, we added four new Criminal Restitution Compact counties to increase the imposition of restitution orders. We reduced the victim appeals' inventory to current year and offered in-person hearings for claimants.
- A new county advocate liaison position was established to work

"The past year of change was remarkable and helped solidify our organization..."

directly with non Joint Powers counties, an advocate 800 number was installed for better and faster communication between the program and advocates, and an advocate web page was launched to provide additional resources for advocates.

- In March, we began the CaRES rollout to the 21 local Joint Powers partners. The statewide rollout was completed in mid-November. Every segment of the organization participated in this effort, supported by the great teamwork of our local partners throughout California.
- Our CaRES project brought additional opportunities that benefit victims, providers and our organization.

The past year of change was remarkable and helped solidify our organization in an era of fast-paced and continual change. I want to thank our three Board members for their leadership, our staff and managers for their dedication, and members of California's victim-services community for their support.

Did You Know?

New Video Highlights Victim Compensation Program

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB) has produced a new DVD titled "Helping Victims Every Day."

"Our new video shows how we're looking for innovative ways to reach out to victims," said Karen McGagin, VCGCB Executive Officer. "We appreciate the courage of the victims of violent crime who participated in this production. The victims' presence in the DVD adds an authenticity that makes the video a compelling tool for the Board's public awareness efforts."

This production underscores the important role that victim advocates and the Victim Compensation Program (VCP) can serve in a victim's life.

The VCP provides the DVD at no cost to the public. An Internet version of the 14-minute video is available on the VCP website, www.victimcompensation.ca.gov.

"Helping Victims Every Day" was produced by the VCGCB and the Office of State Publishing.

If you would like to request copies of the DVD, please complete a materials request form at www.victimcompensation.ca.gov. For large quantities, please e-mail Miles Bristow, Public Information Officer, at miles.bristow@vcgcb.ca.gov.

P.O.S.T. DVD Provides Victims Comprehensive View of the Legal System

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board distributes the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) DVD titled, "Victims of Violence: A Guide to Help Bring Justice." The DVD illustrates the criminal justice process from start to finish through the eyes of victims and their families, victim advocates, superior court judges, investigators, district attorneys, prosecutors, victim witness personnel and public defenders.

The DVD provides victims with a detailed view of what they can expect as their case goes through the legal system, as well as how they can help contribute to a successful prosecution.

If you would like to request copies of the P.O.S.T. DVD, please complete a materials request form at www.victimcompensation.ca.gov. To request large quantities, please e-mail Miles Bristow, Public Information Officer, at miles.bristow@vcgcb.ca.gov.

VCP News Briefs

PROVIDER REMITTANCE NOTIFICATION LETTER

As a service to victim service providers, the VCP issues a "Provider Remittance Notification" letter once a payment is approved in CaRES. This letter includes the information providers need to match a payment to the claimant's account. This letter is a great tool for providers to track their payments from the Board. It is recommended that providers keep the letter at least until the actual payment has been received.

The Remittance Notification Letter includes a Remittance Advice number. This number will also appear on the stub attached to the warrant check issued by the State Controller. Providers can match the Remittance Notification Letter with the check stub using the Remittance Advice Number. Checks issued through CaRES do not list a VCP claim number and patient/claimant name.

VCP LAUNCHES STATEWIDE PROVIDER INFORMATION FORUMS

The VCGCB applauds the thousands of mental health providers who help victims of crime. The Board recognizes their dedication and to this end is launching new efforts to engage in more personal outreach to support victim providers. The Victim Compensation Program is now offering Provider Information Forums throughout California. Upon request, Program staff will come to your city to meet with your group of mental health providers and explain the Program, resolve issues, and answer questions. To request a Provider Information Forum in your area, please contact Janice Patton, VCP manager, at 916-491-3521 or janice.patton@vcgcb.ca.gov.



"Justice for Victims. Justice for All."

2008 National Crime Victims' Rights Week

April 13-19, 2008, marks National Crime Victims' Rights Week. During that week, special events will be held throughout the country to support victims' rights and honor crime victims and victim service providers. The week's theme will be "Justice for Victims. Justice for All."

VICTIMS' MARCH

Please join the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB) and other victim service providers on April 16 in Sacramento on the west steps of the State Capitol for the 19th annual Victims' March on the Capitol.

The VCGCB is compiling a calendar of special events for posting on our website at www.victimcompensation.ca.gov. We would like to include any special events your local organization may be planning for that week.

COMMEMORATIVE RIBBONS

Additionally, the VCGCB is distributing victim awareness ribbons to organizations throughout the state in order to raise awareness of victims' rights. We encourage you to wear a ribbon during the weeklong observance to publicly reflect California's commitment to assisting victims of crime.

Please e-mail your Victims' Right Week calendar items and ribbon requests to Miles.Bristow@vcgcb.ca.gov.

Victim Compensation Program

Executive Staff Update

TERRI HAMILTON WAS APPOINTED DEPUTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF the Administration Division on December 24, 2007. Hamilton previously served as the Deputy Executive Officer of the Fiscal Services Division. Prior to joining the Board, Hamilton served at the Department of General Services.

CHIP SKINNER WAS APPOINTED DEPUTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF the Victim Compensation Program on January 8. Skinner previously served as the Assistant Deputy Executive Officer of the Victim Compensation Program.

PATRICIA VALENCIA-CARLSON WAS NAMED THE DEPUTY Executive Officer of the Fiscal Services Division. Carlson previously served as the Audit Chief. She also has been a research program specialist for the Legislation and Public Affairs Division, the Financial and Business Operation Section, and the Audit and Investigations Branch.

DENNIS BOYDSTUN, THE VCGCB'S DEPUTY EXECUTIVE Officer for Administration, has retired after more than 27 years of service to the state of California. His planning and oversight contributed to the successful relocation of the Board's Sacramento headquarters.

Governor's Victim Advocacy Awards

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

Every year, there are individuals and programs that provide exemplary service to crime victims and their families. In 1992, a Governor's award was created to recognize these accomplishments.

Susan Fisher, Governor Schwarzenegger's Crime Victim Advocate, is calling for nominations for the 2008 Victim Advocacy Awards. These awards will honor individuals and/or programs who have 1) provided outstanding services to crime victims or families of murder victims. 2) provided outstanding leadership in advancing victims' rights throughout the criminal justice system; or, 3) provided outstanding contributions to youth and adult correctional agencies in their efforts to provide comprehensive services to victims.

- Nominations may be submitted by any individual, agency or organization.
- Nominations must be typed on an original copy of the official nomination form plus up to three additional attached pages.
- All nomination forms must be completed entirely

with a thorough response to all questions. Please do not send pictures, products, tapes, etc., but rather describe the content of such items if pertinent.

- Nominations will be judged by members on an awards committee established by the Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- The original nomination form plus six copies must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2008. Please address all nomination entries to: Crime Victim Advocate, Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95814. No faxed copies will be accepted.

Nominations that are not received by the time and date specified will not be considered for review. Nominations that do not use the correct format or do not include the correct number of copies will not be considered for review.

For a copy of the nomination form or any questions regarding the nominations and awards, please contact Susan Fisher at susan.fisher@gov.ca.gov or Sandi J. Menefee, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, at (916) 341-7066.

CaRES Update...

With the CaRES statewide rollout to our county partners completed, we are now focused on enhancing the performance of the system. The benefits of CaRES include faster payments to victims and providers, a streamlined business process for handling claims, enhanced customer service, reduction of errors, and more efficient sharing of VCP workload. System performance enhancements through our maintenance and operations efforts will allow for instant access to claim summary information to advocates in every county. This access project is being piloted in Fresno and Ventura Counties. County criminal restitution staff will also have access to this claim summary information while CaRES developers build a comprehensive Criminal Disposition Tracking System for use in the future.

Victim Advocate Access

CaRES benefits being realized through this maintenance and operations phase also include two new types of application forms. One version of the form is completed

by hand and features text boxes for individual letters that constrain text allowing “optical character recognition” scanning. This means that the information on the completed form is quickly scanned directly into CaRES. The second version uses Adobe “LiveCycle” technology and is completed using a computer. As the form is completed, the data entered is automatically placed into a bar code. Once the form is printed, signed and submitted, the information contained in the bar code is automatically entered into CaRES as the form is scanned into the system. The LiveCycle application has been piloted in San Bernardino County and in the final pilot evaluation, the form has proven to be successful.

Many more benefits of the CaRES system will be realized as we continue with the maintenance and operations efforts to enhance system performance.

Live Cycle Application

CaRES is an award-winning project. In December 2007, the Board accepted a “Best of California, Project Excellence Award.” The award was presented by the Center for Digital Government.



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